

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 056280

65(53S)

ORIGIN NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 EB-07 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 SP-02 NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15

STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 L-02 H-02 IGA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 COME-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 /068 R

66616

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:PKBULLEN

APPROVED BY NEA/ARN:DAKORN

EB/RSERVICE (DRAFT)

USDA:LWALLACE

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O 131515Z MAR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056280

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2 LINE 9 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SY

SUBJECT: ISSUANCE OF PA'S UNDER NOVEMBER PL 480 AGREEMENT

REFERENCE: DAMASCUS 940

1. AGRICULTURE AND SYRIAN EMBASSY HAVE AGREED TO MEET ON THURSDAY MARCH 13 AT 1400 FOR SIGNING PA'S. IN MEANTIME, AMBASSADOR KABBANI PHONED MINISTER IMADI LATE MARCH 12 TO GET DECISION ON WHETHER TENDERS WOULD BE ISSUED IN DAMASCUS OR BY EMBASSY HERE (IMADI GAVE HIM DISCRETION), SO IMADI IS INFORMED OF EXPECTED SIGNING.

2. AS YOU KNOW, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DELAY WAS CAUSED BY SYRIAN MISUNDERSTANDING OF US WHEAT AND RICE GRADES. THIS
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WAS STRAIGHTENED OUT DURING COURSE OF FEBRUARY. IN A MORE

GENERAL WAY, THERE ARE A HOST OF PL 480 REGULATIONS WHICH AGRICULTURE WANTED TO MAKE SURE SYRIANS UNDERSTOOD BEFORE GOING AHEAD WITH PA'S, IN ORDER TO PREVENT PROBLEMS AT LATER DATE. THIS ALWAYS TAKES SOME TIME WITH A NEW PL 480 RECIPIENT, AND SYRIA WAS NO EXCEPTION. CHANGES WITHIN SYRIAN EMBASSY HERE DID OCCASION SOME FURTHER DELAY DURING THIS PROCESS. DCM SABBAGH WAS INITIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PL 480 MATTERS, BUT HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO BECOME AMBASSADOR TO JORDAN. THIRD

SECRETARY HABIB THEN TOOK THIS RESPONSIBILITY (FYI: AGRICULTURE SAYS HABEEB HAD DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING PL 480, EXPECIALLY WHEAT GRADES. END FYI.), BUT HABEEB RETURNED TO DAMASCUS FEBRUARY 24 WITH A FEW QUESTIONS STILL UNSETTLED. ABOUCHAER HAS TAKEN PL 480 RESPONSIBILITY SINCE, AND AGRICULTURE HAS FOUND HIM PARTICULARLY ABLE INTERLOCUTOR. ONE WEEK'S DELAY OCCURRED MARCH 5-11 BECAUSE, AS RESULT OF DISAGREEMENT WITH BANKS, ALL OUTSTANDING PA'S HAD TO BE REVISED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POSSIBLE USAGE OF LASH BARGES FOR SHIPPING.

3. YOU MAY DRAW ON FOREGOING TO THE EXTENT YOU CONSIDER IT USEFUL IN DISCUSSING MATTER WITH SARG. IN ANY CASE, PLEASE ASSURE SYRIANS THAT THERE WAS NO RPT NO POLITICAL MOTIVATION WHATSOEVER INVOLVED IN DELAY BEFORE ISSUANCE OF PA'S.

4. WILL INFORM YOU WHEN PA'S SIGNED. INGERSOLL

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NNN

Message Attributes

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